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ABSTRACT

The educational system of Sri Lanka is described in this 15 section document. Sections 1 and 2 provide a general overview of the country and a history of its educational system. Section 3, "Organization and Administration of the Education System," describes the programs and responsibilities of the central and regional administration. The primary, junior, and senior secondary education cycles in the public schools are described in Section 4, "General Education." Section 5, "Higher Education," contains information about higher education in Sri Lanka. It briefly describes the university system, the Open University, and the technical institutes. Middle level vocational education courses and apprenticeship programs are described in Section 6, "Technical/Vocational Education." A flow chart is included which diagrams a student's path through the educational/training system. Non-formal, government sponsored education programs for those who leave, or have never attended school is contained in Section 7. A brief description of the curriculum is given in Section 8, "Curriculum Development." Special programs within the curriculum include: the teaching of English, education television service, and population education. Section 9, "Teacher Education," provides an overview of the various teacher education programs in Sri Lanka including: pre-service teacher training, professional training for graduate teachers, distance teacher education, and in-service training. Section 10, "Sports and Co-Curricular Activities," presents these activities as an important part of the educational system. Brief program descriptions are included in: Section 11, "Special Education;" Section 12, "Public Examinations;" and Section 13, "Privision of Incentives." Section 14, "Innovative Projects," describes the school cluster and school zones to overcome school shortcomings. Section 15, "Expenditure on Education" concludes the publication. (APG)

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EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

ED280746

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EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

Ministry of Education,
Colombo 2,
Sri Lanka.
July, 1984.

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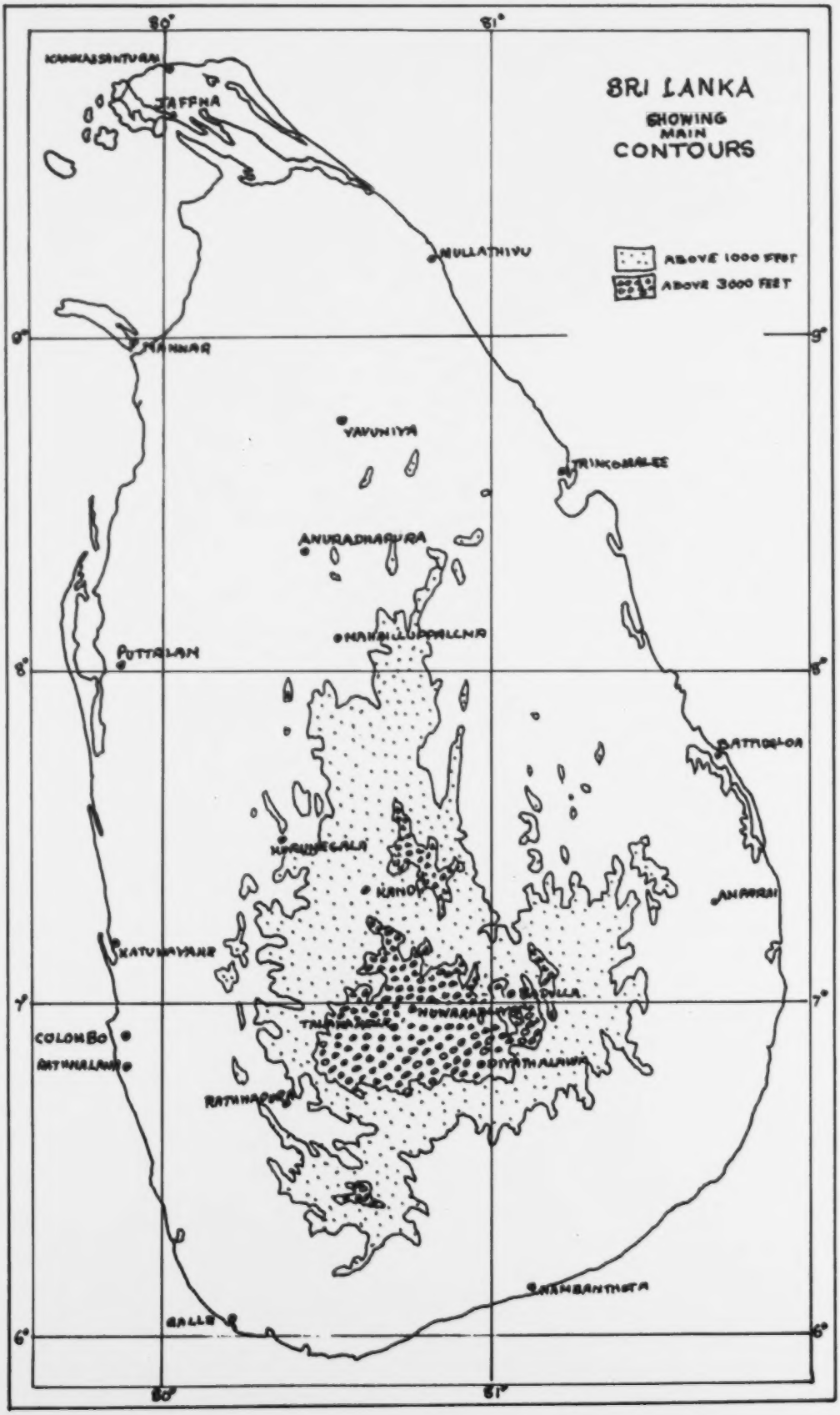

SRI LANKA
SHOWING
MAIN
CONTOURS
ABOVE 1000 FEET
ABOVE 3000 FEET
80°
81°
9°
8°
7°
6°
KANKASANTURAI
JAFFNA
MULLATHIVU
MANNAR
VAVUNIYA
TRINCOMALEE
ANURADHAPURA
PUTTALAM
BATTICALOA
KURUNEGALA
KANDY
AMPARAI
KATUNAYAKE
COLOMBO
RATHNAPURA
GALLE

1.0 GENERAL BACKGROUND

1.1 The Country

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean situated between the Northern latitudes 5° 55′ and 9° 50′ and the Eastern longitudes 79° 42′ and 81° 52′ and separated from the Indian sub-continent by the Palk Strait. The island is pear-shaped and has a land area of 65,000 sq. km. Its greatest length is 432 km. and its greatest width is 224 km.

The land consists of a low lying coastal plain and an upland belt which rises to merge in the Central Highlands. The highest peaks are Pidurutalagala (2548 m.) and Kirigalpotta (2411 m.). Most of the rivers rise in the Highlands and flow in a radial pattern towards the sea. The longest river is the Mahaweli which flows into sea at Trincomalee.

The average temperature in the low country is around 27°C, while in the hills it is less. Rainfall is mainly monsoonal, convectional or depressional. The South-West of the plains and the hills receive a heavy rainfall of over 80" from the South-West Monsoons, while the Northern, Eastern and North-Central parts which are in the Dry Zone receive a lesser rainfall.

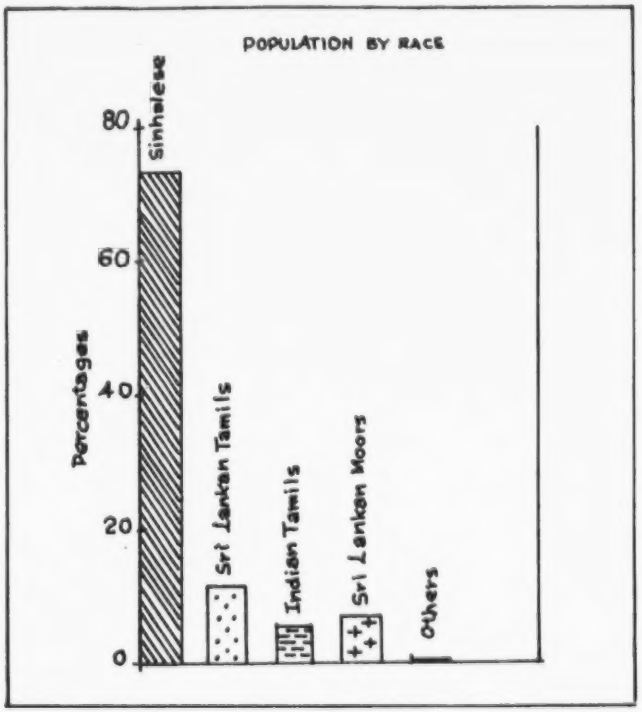
The country can be divided into five main geographical regions:

(a) The Central Highlands
(b) The Wet Zone Lowlands
(c) The Dry Zone Lowlands
(d) The Arid Zone Lowlands
(e) Jaffna Peninsula.

1.2 The People

Sri Lanka has a population of about 15 million composed of multi-racial and multi-religious groups. The majority of the people are Sinhalese who account for 74% of the total population. Sri Lanka Tamils constitute 12.6%, Muslims 7.1%, Indian Tamils 5.6%, and others 0.7% of the population.

(Diagram **1***)*



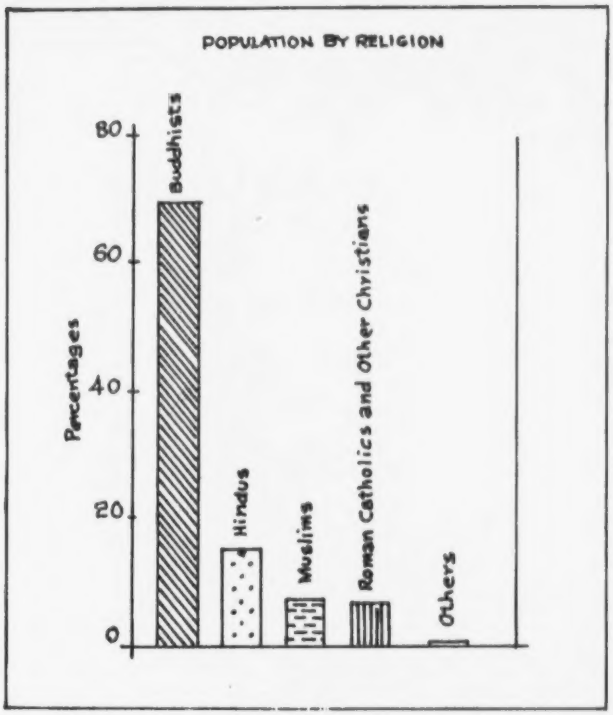
3

The Indian Tamils are mainly the descendants of the estate labourers of South Indian origin who were brought to the country to work on the plantations during British rule. There are other minorities such as Moors and Burghers. The Moors are mostly the descendants of the early Arab traders. The Burghers are mainly the descendants of the Dutch and the Portuguese. (Diagram 1).

The people of the country are divisible into four main religious groups:

Buddhists	—	69.3%
Hindus	—	15.5%
Roman Catholics and other Christians	—	7.5%
Muslims	—	7.5%
Others	—	0.2%

(Diagram 2)

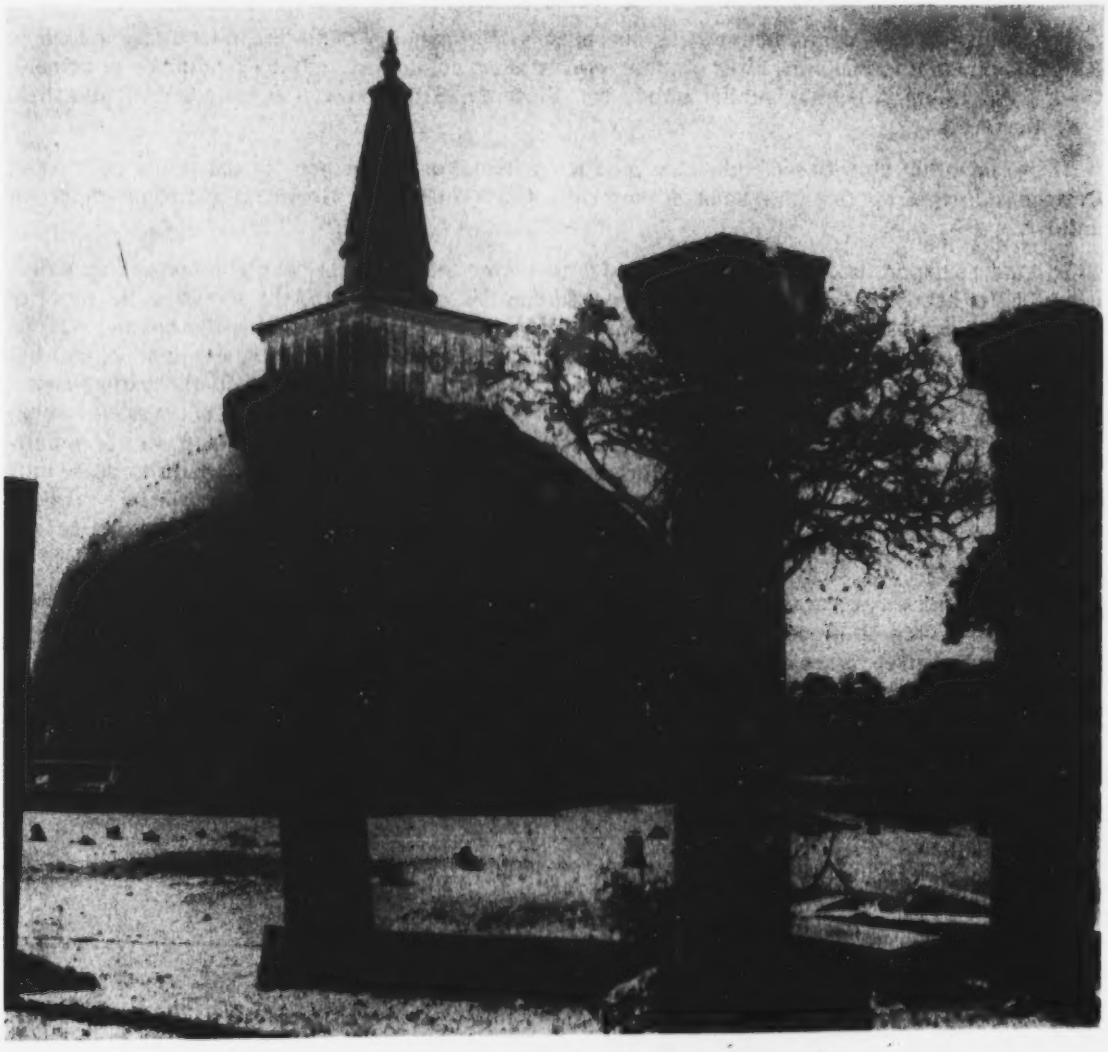


Sri Lanka's population is described as youthful, as 45% of the people are under 20 years of age. The dependency ratio which is calculated by expressing the under 15-year-olds and over 60-year-olds as a percentage of the economically active population (15–60) is 72% in 1981.

The largest concentrations of population are in the South-West and Central regions of the isalnd and in the Jaffna Peninsula. These regions comprising less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the country's land area accommodate more than half of the total population. The remaining parts of the country i.e. North, North-Central and Eastern regions are comparatively sparsely populated. The average density of population is 230 persons per sq. kilometre, but varies from 2603 persons per sq. kilometre in the densely populated areas to 36 in the sparsely populated regions. Most of the people live in rural areas and only about 22% live in urban settlements.

1.3 The History

Sri Lanka has preserved a national and cultural identity for over 25 centuries and has a recorded history which stretches from the 6th century B.C. to the present day. The extensive evidence of ancient buildings and an intricate network of man-made lakes are monuments to a great civilization that flourished around the ancient capital cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Foreign invasions and internal strife combined with the outbreak of epidemics caused the abandonment of earlier centres of civilization. The beginning of the 16th century witnessed the onset of European Powers which culminated in the capture of the whole island by the British in 1815. The political and social changes ushered in during British rule paved the way for a gradual process of constitutional reforms leading to the attainment of independence in 1948.



Ruwanweliseya – A Buddhist Stupa in the Ancient City of Anuradhapura.

1.4 The Economy

Sri Lanka is predominantly an agricultural country. The important peasant crop is paddy. Nearly 66 million hectares are under this staple crop. Out of this area about 37 million hectares are in the Dry Zone, and the balance is in the Wet Zone. A little more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the cultivated area is entirely rainfed. The remaining two-thirds depend on irrigation facilities.

A variety of other crops are cultivated. These include kurakkan, maize, pulses, chillies, onions, vegetables, potatoes and tobacco. Most of these are grown in the North Central regions of the Dry Zone.

Plantation agriculture which is the main foreign exchange earner, consists of three main crops: tea, rubber and coconut. Most of the tea is grown in the Highlands. Rubber is confined to the centre of the Wet Zone. Unlike other plantation crops, the coconut palm grows in most areas of the island, but is concentrated in the coastal belt along the Western and Southern parts of the island.

The industrial base of the economy is still narrow. The majority of the manufacturing industries are Government undertakings. Most of these industries are concerned with the production of cement, steel, paper, textiles, leather, rubber goods etc. Since 1979 the private sector share of industries has increased.

There are other agro-based industries producing items for export and for the domestic market. Cottage industries operate on a small scale mainly in the rural areas. Gemming is also an important industry.

Sri Lanka's export income has been derived largely from the output of her plantation sector, which accounts for nearly 60% of the export earnings. During the mid-fifties and the sixties, as the terms of trade moved against her, the inherent weakness in the export structure (that is the openness of Sri Lanka's economy and the high degree of her vulnerability in relation to the uncertainties of international trade), became increasingly evident. The continuing difficulties faced in the export sector over a long period of time resulted in the imposition of restrictions on imports and use of foreign exchange. These restrictions which offered a protective umbrella helped the development of import-substitution industries. But over–protection and a small domestic market were found to be serious limiting factors that hampered the building of a sound industrial base in the country. The diversification of the economy based on import-substitution industries had severe limitations in the mid-seventies.

A new economic policy was introduced in mid-1977 by the Government that came into power in that year, in order to move the economy away from a long period of rigid government controls to one in which market forces and the private sector would play an increasing role. These new policy reforms included the unification of the exchange rates at a somewhat depreciated level and the adoption of a flexible exchange rate, liberalization of imports, withdrawal of price controls, adoption of more realistic interest rates, and tariffs and the diversion of more resources to investment.

Among the major lead development projects which the Government launched, the following are the most important:

i. The Accelerated Mahaweli Project, (The largest river valley development project in the country).
ii. Free Trade Zone,
iii. The Urban Renewal and Housing Programmes and,
iv. District Integrated Rural Development Projects.

1.5 The Polity

Since Independence, Sri Lanka has adopted a Parliamentary form of Government based on the British System. This system was modified under the Republican Constitution adopted in 1978. However, the present system preserves many of the features of the old system with a Parliament elected by the people. The new Constitution, which is the supreme law of the land, provides for an elected Executive President who is the head of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The Parliament consists of 168 Members elected by the people on the basis of electorates. The country has a strong multi-party system. Under this multi-party system of democracy, Sri Lanka has been able to change Governments peacefully by the ballot on several occasions since Independence.

1.6 Socio-Economic Progress

The democratization of education in the past decades has contributed towards the removal of barriers to social advancement to a significant degree.

Sri Lanka has achieved a high literacy rate of 86% (see Table 1). This could be attributed to the provision of free education and the relatively high rate of participation. Education is free from Kindergarten to University.

The percentage of literates in Sri Lanka:

Year	*Males*	*Females*	*Both Sexes*
.. 1901	42.0	8.0	26.4
.. 1911	47.2	12.5	31.0
.. 1921	56.4	21.2	39.9
.. 1946	70.1	43.8	57.8
.. 1953	80.7	69.0	75.5
.. 1963	85.6	67.3	76.9
.. 1971	85.6	70.9	78.5
.. 1981	90.5	82.4	86.5

Table – I

As a result of the improvement of health services and adoption of welfare measures the death rate has declined to 6 per 1000 – one of the lowest in the world. The drop in the death rate is attributed to the control of malaria which had been a major killer in the country before 1945. Other factors such as improvements in the medical facilities of the rural areas, increase in the public health consciousness of the people and the welfare measures adopted by the government also contributed to the reduction of the death rate.

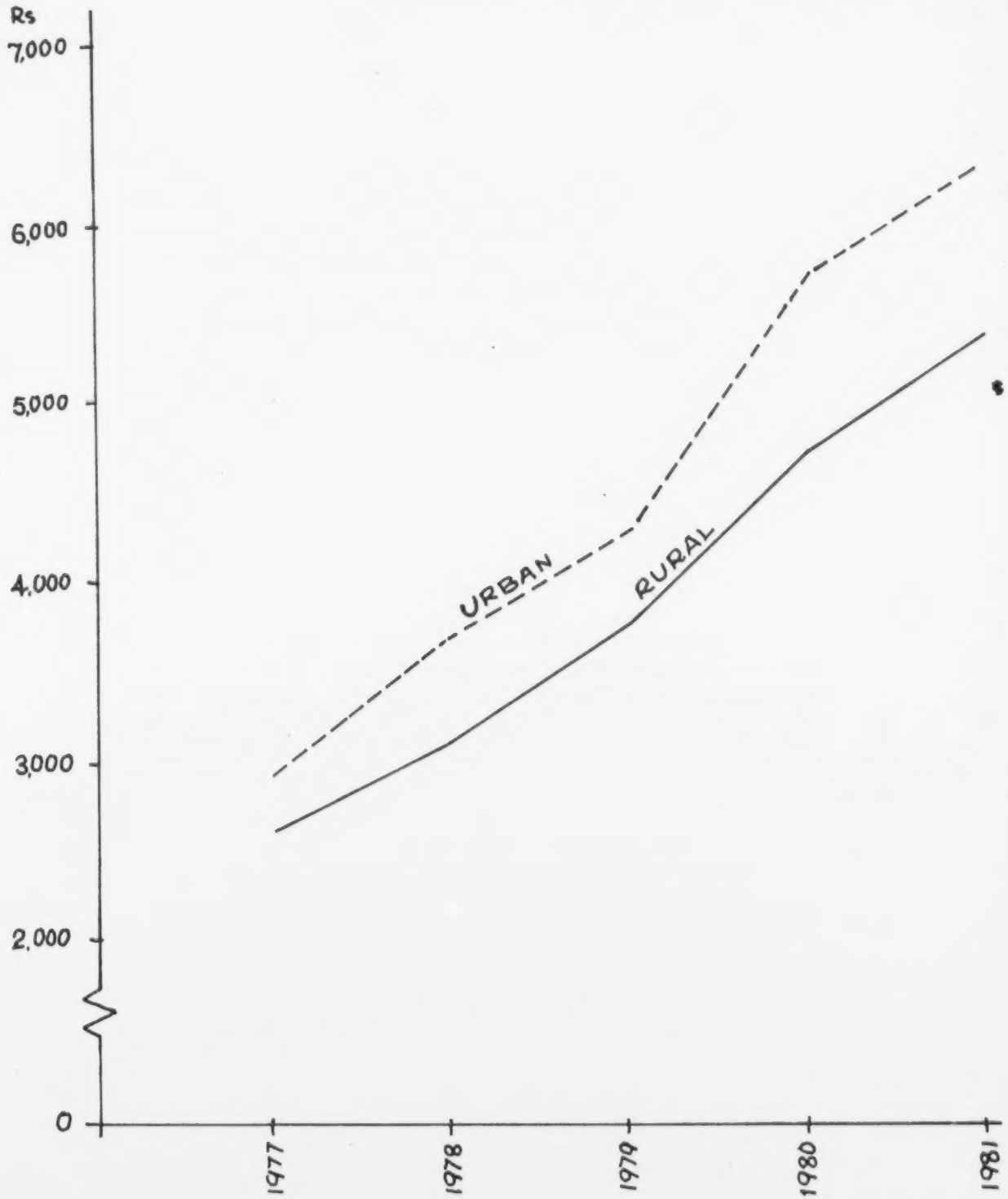
The infant and maternal mortality rates have also declined. This is due to improved programmes in midwifery and child care services and improved nutrition and environmental sanitation.

The expectation of life at birth almost doubled during the first seven decades of the century. Today it is 67 years.

At constant (1970) prices the G.N.P. for 1982 is estimated at U.S.$ 831 million which shows an increase of 4.8% over the previous year. Per capita G.N.P. at current prices in 1982 has been estimated at U.S.$ 283. In real terms this shows an increase of 3.1% over the previous year. The agricultural sector recorded a growth rate of 2.5% in 1982.

The above features are significant achievements for a developing country.

PER CAPITA G.D.P. AT CURRENT PRICES



2.0 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The beginning of the education system of Sri Lanka can be traced to the introduction of Buddhism to the country in the third century B.C. From that time until the advent of the Western powers in the 16th century, the centres of learning were the Buddhist temples where the monks learned the Buddhist doctrine and laymen were taught letters and the reading of Buddhist scriptures. In addition to the Buddhist doctrine, they also fostered secular learning which embraced disciplines such as poetry, medicine and engineering. As a result of the advent of European powers there was a gradual erosion of the traditional education base of the country.

The Portuguese, the first of these European Powers, established schools mainly for the purpose of converting the local population to Catholicism. The Dutch who followed them re-organized the school system for furthering their own missionary objectives.

After the British gained control of the Island, there was the need to train local personnel for the lower rungs of the administrative services. The Colonial Government, therefore, established schools in the English medium. The arrival of Anglicans and other Missionaries gave an impetus to the establishment of such schools. In 1869, the Department of Public Instruction was established with the objective of managing government schools and the expansion of educational facilities. With the establishment of English schools by the Missionaries, there emerged a dual system – English Medium schools with qualified teachers and better facilities which charged fees and catered to the upper classes and the vernacular schools which imparted free education to the children of the poor. Although some headway was made in the establishment of schools, a large number of children of school-going age did not attend school, and hence in 1907 an attempt was made to introduce compulsory education.

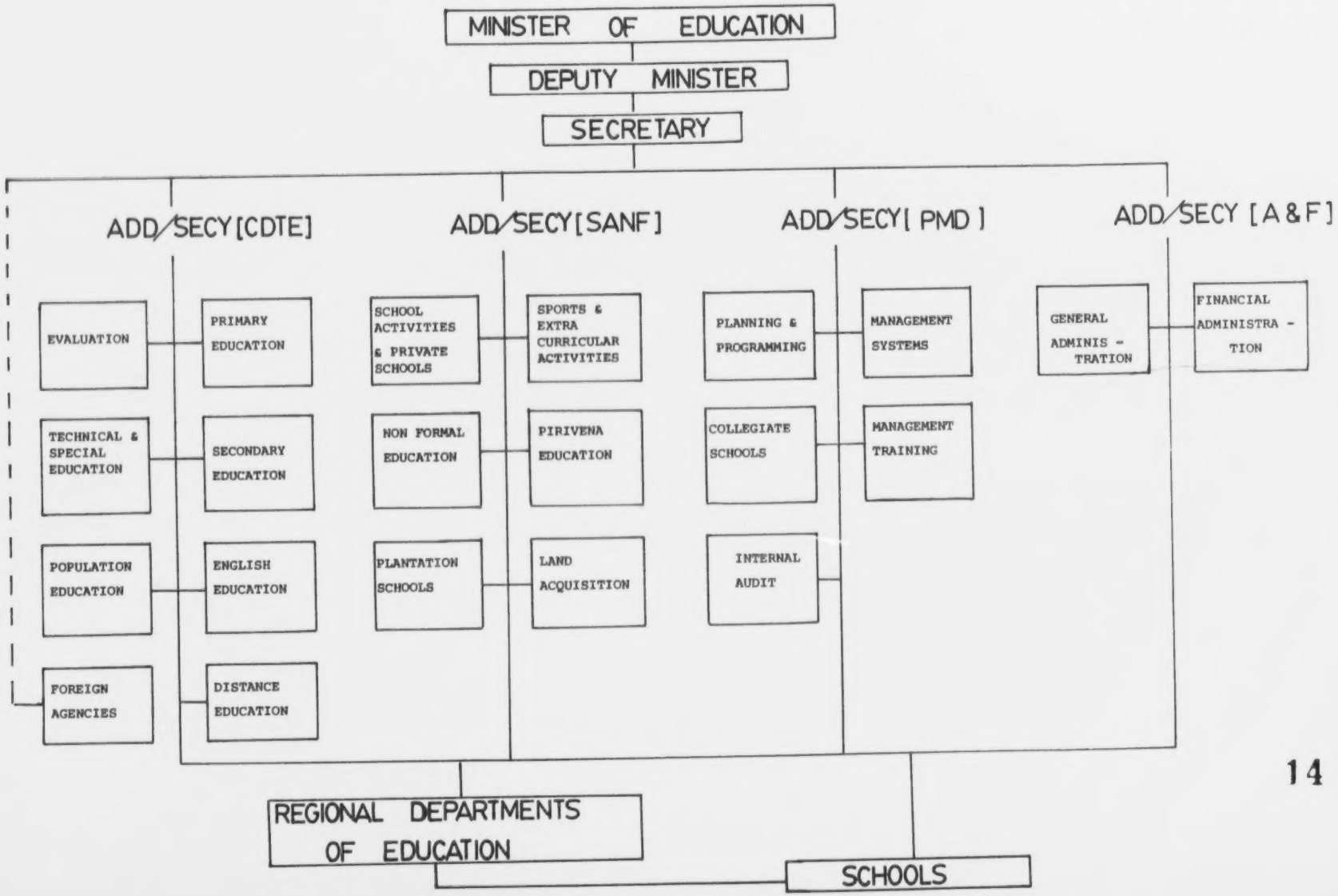
The introduction of Universal Adult Franchise and the grant of internal self-government under the constitutional reforms of 1931 brought the issue of education to the forefront. The educational policies implemented during the thirties and forties constitute a high water mark in the process of democratization of education in Sri Lanka. A system of free-education was introduced in 1945 in pursuance of these policies.

The introduction of free education from the Kindergarten to the University and the adoption of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction provided for greater equality of opportunity and social mobility. It broke down the exclusiveness of Assisted English schools and opened the doors of Secondary and Tertiary education to talented pupils from poor homes.

After Independence (1948) successive governments continued with the policy of democratizing educational provision. There was a progressive increase in enrolment of pupils in schools and a rise in literacy rates.

Up to 1960 the state schools and state aided private schools continued to exist side by side resulting in a duality of control in the education system. With the take-over of assisted schools in the early sixties this duality came to an end.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



3.0 ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

3.1 Central Administration

Education is the concern of several Ministries and Agencies in Sri Lanka.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of general education and teacher-training programmes. The Ministry of Higher Education created in 1978 is similarly responsible for the system of Higher and technical education in the country.

The Project Ministry of Education Services functioning since 1980, is mainly responsible for the production and distribution of textbooks, equipment, furniture and the construction of school buildings and other educational infrastructure. Students' nutritional Programme and library services are other activities discharged by this Ministry.

The Ministers derive their executive power from the President. Thus the Executive Head of the Ministry is the Minister of Education who is assisted by a Deputy Minister and a Project Minister of Education Services. The Secretary to the ministry is responsible for the effective implementation of educational policy and exercises supervision over all activities and functions of the Ministry and its departments and agencies subject to the general direction and control of the minister. The Secretary is assisted by other officials in implementing the educational policy of the government.

At the Ministry, there are four Additional Secretaries responsible for providing the staff services in the fields of Curriculum Development and Teacher Education (CDTE), Planning and Management Development (PMD), Administration and Finance (A&F), Non-Formal Education and School Activities (SANF). For the purpose of implementation of policy, the Island is divided into 4 ranges and each additional secretary, in addition to his staff functions is responsible for supervising a range. They are assisted by Deputy Directors-General of Education, Directors of Education, Chief Accountant, Director of School Works, Senior Assistant Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, Chief Education Officers and Accountants. Two other institutions, namely, the Department of Examinations and the Department of Educational Publications are headed by two Commissioners.

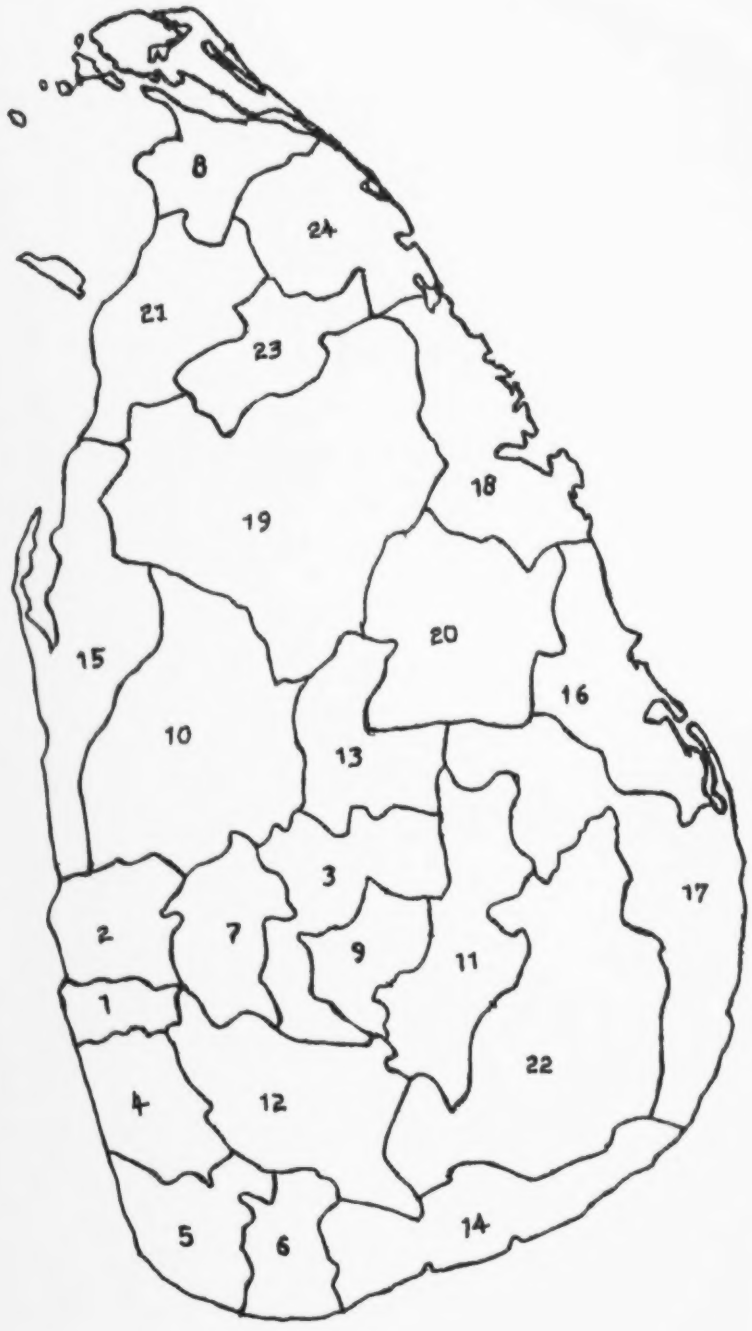
An independent body named the Education Service Committee under the Public Service Commission was created in 1979 with the objective of discharging such functions as recruitment, promotion, deployment, and disciplinary control of teachers and Education Service Officers. The appointment of this committee has rendered possible the recruitment and transfer of teachers in an atmosphere free from undue influence.

3.2 Regional Administration

The actual implementation of the educational programme is the responsibility of the Regional Departments of Education. There are 24 such departments and steps are being taken to increase the number to 25. A Regional Department is managed by a Regional Director of Education (RDE). The Director is assisted by Chief Education Officers, Education Officers, an Accountant, a School Works Engineer and Supervisors designated as Circuit Education Officers (CEO). In large administrative Districts where the number of schools and the school population are too large to be managed by one office, sub-offices have been established under Chief Education Officers. (Ch. EO).

The work of the Regional Educational Departments is organized under five divisions, namely: (a) Education Administration, (b) Educational Development (c) General Administration (d) Finance and (e) Schools Works (buildings). The RDE himself heads the Education Development Division, while being responsible for the efficient management of the entire Regional Department.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS IN SRI LANKA



1. Colombo
2. Gampaha
3. Kandy
4. Kalutara
5. Galle
6. Matara
7. Kegalle
8. Jaffna
9. Nuwara Eliya
10. Kurunegala
11. Badulla
12. Ratnapura
13. Matale
14. Hambantota
15. Puttalam
16. Batticaloa
17. Amparai
18. Trincomalee
19. Anuradhapura
20. Polonnaruwa
21. Mannar
22. Moneragala
23. Vavuniya
24. Mullaitivu

In Regions where there are Sub-Offices, the RDE is responsible for the efficient management of the entire Region inclusive of the areas under the Sub-Offices. The Chief Education Officer and his staff in the Sub-Office form the RDE's supportive staff. The activities of the Sub-Office are confined to the three areas of General Administration, Finance and School Works.

Each district is divided into several circuits which are more or less co-extensive with the electorates. On the average each circuit consists of 30 to 40 schools. A circuit is in the charge of a Circuit Education Officer (CEO) whose main function is the supervision of schools in the circuit. He also functions as the link between the schools and the Regional Department of Education. In addition there are also Specialist Circuit Education Officers who are in charge of supervision of various subject areas such as Science, Agriculture, Technical subjects,Commerce, Home Science, Physical Education, Art, Music and Dancing.

Parents participating in 'Shramadana' to clean school premises.

4.0 GENERAL EDUCATION

The educational system of the country is broadly divisible into three sub-systems namely: (a) General Education (b) Vocational/Technical Education and (c) Higher Education. General Education is provided mainly within the formal school system. Pre-school education is not a component of state-managed general education. Pre-school education facilities are provided by Local Government Authorities, and Non-Governmental Organizations. In addition to formal educational programmes there are also non-formal programmes to provide vocational/technical and general education.

Education is free from kindergarten to university in all state and state-aided institutions. Although there are a few fee-levying private institutions, management of education is primarily a state responsibility. General education within the formal system is divisible into primary education (grades 0–5), junior secondary education (grades 6–10) and senior secondary education (grades 11–12).

4.1 Primary Cycle

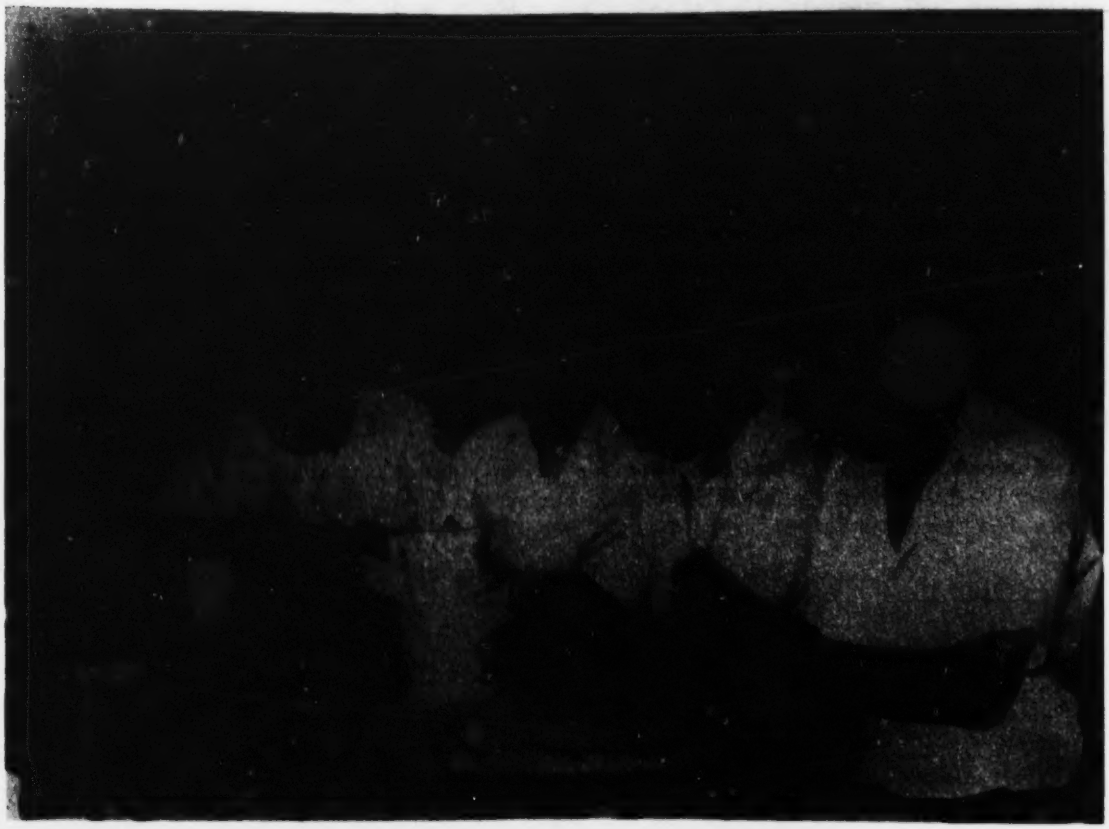
The primary cycle consists of six grades, viz., Kindergarten (grade 0) and Grades 1–5. Kindergarten provides play-oriented activities of a non-formal nature designed to initiate children to the more formal cycle beginning with Grade 1. Here the main emphasis is on the provision of opportunities for the observation and appreciation of the physical environment, acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and understanding social life and elements of culture. The subsequent areas included in the curriculum are Religion, First Language, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, Aesthetic Studies, Creative Activities and English.

Promotion from one grade to the next is based on continuous evaluation of the general performance of the pupil. There are no compulsory examinations at the end of the primary school. A cumulative record sheet is used to indicate and evaluate the progress of a child.

Activity – based instruction in a Primary Class.

4.2 The Junior Secondary Cycle

In the Junior Secondary School, instruction is provided according to a common curriculum which consists of Religion, First Language, English, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Social Studies, Health Science, Aesthetic Studies, and Technical subjects. In order to develop life skills and proper attitudes towards the world of work, technical subjects are included in the curriculum and pupils have to choose one of these subjects. Similarly, the pupils select one of the three subjects provided under Aesthetic studies, i.e. Art, Music and Dancing. At the end of the junior secondary cycle (Grade 10), pupils sit a public examination known as the General Certificate of Education (Ordinary Level) Examination. Admission to the Senior Secondary Level as well as to some of the vocational/technical programmes depends on the performance at the above examination.



Pupils engaged in clay-work under the 'Life Skills' Development Programme.

4.3 The Senior Secondary Cycle

Grades 10 and 11 constitute the senior secondary cycle of general education. Senior Secondary Education is divided into three streams; Science, Commerce, and Arts. Pupils offer four subjects for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level Examination which they sit at the end of Grade 12. Admission to Universities and other Higher Educational/Technical Programmes is a function of performance at the GCE (AL) Examination.

A Practical Class in Science (Senior Secondary Curriculum)

4.4 Schooling Facilities

Institutions providing general education are primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools. The majority of the junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools have primary grades. The number of schools in the different categories are given in Table II.

Schools according to Grades, 1982

Cycle/Cycles	*No. of Schools*		
	Grades	*Total*	*Percentage*
Primary	LKG– 5	4007	42%
Primary+Junior Secondary	LKG–10	3750	39%
Primary+Junior Secondary+Senior Secondary . .	LKG–12	1415	15%
Junior Secondary+Senior Secondary	6–12	372	4%
	Total	9544	100

TABLE II

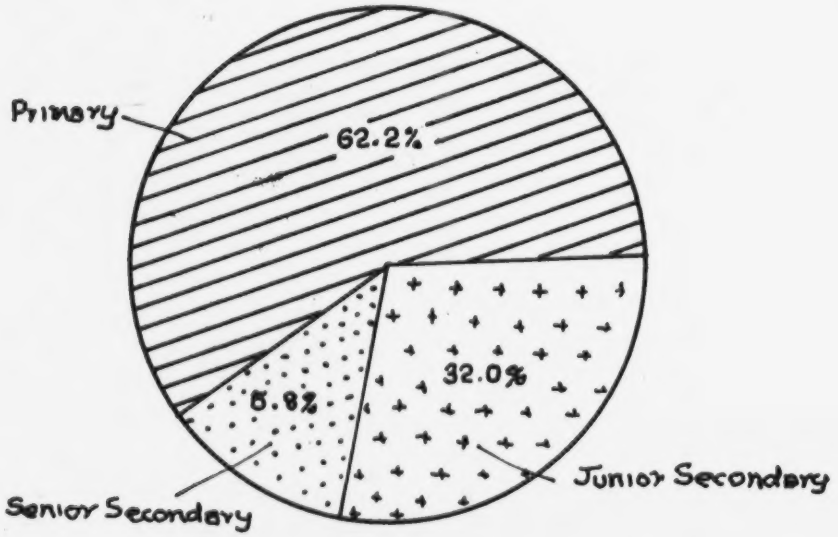
The enrolments in the different cycles of education have increased over the years. Participation of the population in the age group 5–14 increased from 74% in 1971 to 84% in 1981. Nearly 70% of the pupils who enter the lowest grade of the primary cycle complete the cycle. Enrolments in the different cycles of general education according to sex are given in Table III.

16

Enrolment in Primary, Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Cycles by Sex

Cycle	Total Enrolment			Percentage	
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Primary	1093875	1019239	2113114	51.7	48.3
Junior Secondary	542377	562533	1104910	49.1	50.9
Senior Secondary	72647	107384	180031	40.3	59.7
Total	1708899	1689155	3398055	50.3	49.7

TABLE III



STUDENT ENROLEMENT BY CYCLE – 1982

4.5 Private Schools

Although the private schools form less than 1% of the total number of schools, they are a part of the education system of the country. Privately managed schools conform to government regulations and operate within the policy framework outlined by the Ministry of Education.

4.6. Pirivenas

Pirivenas are educational institutions run by the Buddhist clergy. They, while catering primarily to the needs of the Buddhist monks also conduct classes for lay students preparing for public examinations recognised by the state. These institutions are provided with a grant to meet the running expenses such as expenditure on teachers' salaries.

There are 348 Pirivenas in the country with 15,556 Bhikku pupils (monks) and 15,049 lay pupils.

5.0 HIGHER EDUCATION

Before the advent of the British, there were ancient seats of higher learning administered by the Buddhist clergy. However, the history of higher education in Sri Lanka in the modern sense is of comparatively recent origin. University education began only in January 1924 with the establishment of the Ceylon University College. This College was affiliated to the London University and prepared students for the B.A. and B.Sc. Degrees. The first independant University was established in 1942.

Until the year 1978 Management of General, Technical and Higher Education was the responsibility of a single Ministry of Education. In that year, the Ministry of Higher Education was created to be in charge of the functions of development of both University and Technical Education. The co-ordination of University Education and the apportionment of funds to Universities and Higher Educational Institutes come within the purview of the University Grants Commission, which was set up in 1978.

A view of the University of Colombo.

5.1 Universities

In 1972, the Government introduced a new Act (the University of Ceylon Act No. 1 of 1972) by which it converted the five Universities then existing as well as the Institute of Practical Technology into Campuses to form one monolithic university. This was done with a view to effect economy in the administration and to optimise the utilization of limited resources of finance and manpower by re-organization and rationalization of all departments and the prevention of unnecessary duplication or multiplication of courses of study. However, the administrative machinery which the Act introduced was so complex and the possibility of conflict between the multitude of authorities which it had created was so great that the Act could not be effectively implemented. A new Act (the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978) was passed in December 1978 repealing the old Act of 1972. By the new Act the campuses of the old monolithic university were again elevated to universities with academic freedom and much administrative autonomy. A University Grants Commission (UGC) was also created under this Act for the co-ordination of higher education and proper allocation and effective use of resources.

During the last four decades University education in Sri Lanka has grown so rapidly that it has today 18 Higher Educational Institutions and Institutes, namely, seven full-fledged Universities, one University College, one University Campus, one Open University, one private Medical College and seven Institutes (three of which are post-graduate institutes). They have nearly 20,000 internal students and more than 10 Faculties with nearly 2000 permanent staff. They grant more than 10 different degrees.

The expansion of the University system over the years is indicated by the following figures:

Year		*No. of Universities/ University Colleges/ Institutes*
1953	—	01
1971	—	04
1981	—	15
1984	—	18

An innovation to financially assist University students is the creation of a Trust Fund to which proceeds from two lotteries as well as private donations are credited. The Fund annually awards scholarships on the basis of merit and income to deserving university students.

5.2 Open University

The Open University of Sri Lanka, which is an academically autonomous institute, was established in May 1980. The courses are designed to enable those over 18 years to pursue courses leading to a First or Post-graduate Degree or a Diploma or a Certificate or other awards.

The Open University has already implemented several programmes successfully. The most significant of these is the programme of Physical and Biological Sciences. This year, 1,466 students were registered from all over the country for this programme. This number exceeds the total enrolment of the Science Faculties of the traditional Universities by about 300. Students are provided with printed course materials and practical classes held at 14 study centres through-out the Island. This programme would immensely contribute to making the Sri Lankan population science-literate.

5.3 Technical Institutes/Colleges

Technical education has expanded rapidly during the last few decades as shown by the data given below:

Year	*No. of Technical Institutes Colleges*
1953 ..	01
1971 ..	03
1981 ..	21
1984 ..	23

Out of the 23 existing Technical Institutes, 22 are under the Ministry of Higher Education. These Institutes offer a range of courses at different levels covering a wide field of different skills, all geared to meet the manpower needs of the country. In addition there is one University which provides Degree and Diploma courses in Technology.

Technical Education Class in Progress.

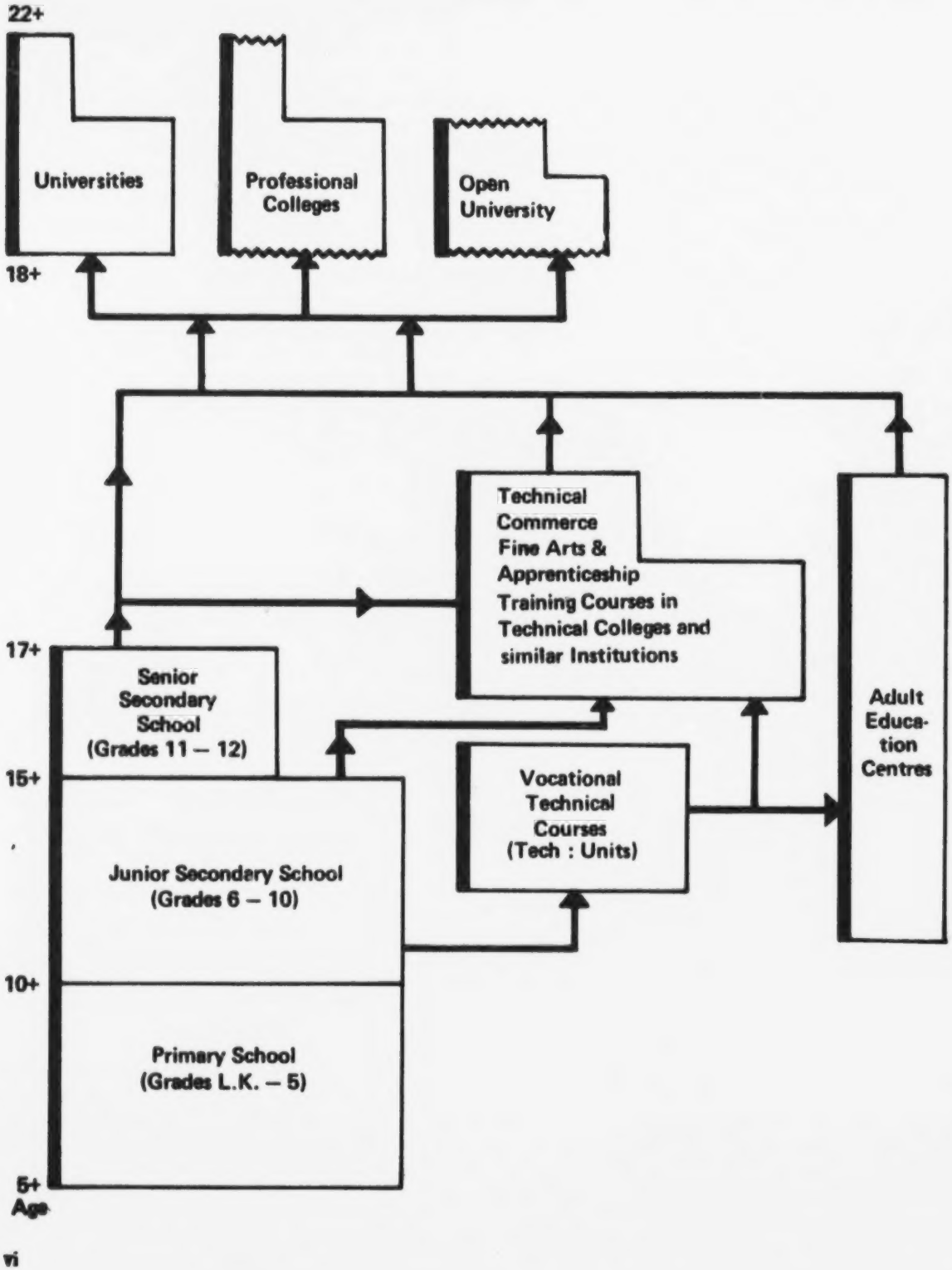
6.0 TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

In addition to the courses available at the Poly-technical and Junior Technical Institutes under the Ministry of Higher Education, there are a large number of middle level technical/vocational courses conducted by other Ministries and Agencies. Among these Ministries, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Youth Affairs share a major responsibility for the training of technical manpower.

The National Apprenticeship Board which is under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Employment is instrumental in providing vocational and technical training to a large number of clients. It has around 11,000 apprentices in over 200 industrial establishments undergoing training in more than 150 categories of trades. The present popularity of the apprenticeship training programme may be attributed to the fact that the apprentices are financially supported by the Government during their period of training and absorbed into industrial ventures on completion of training.

Training in Industrial Sewing at a Centre assisted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Employment.

EXISTING SYSTEM OF EDUCATION/TRAINING



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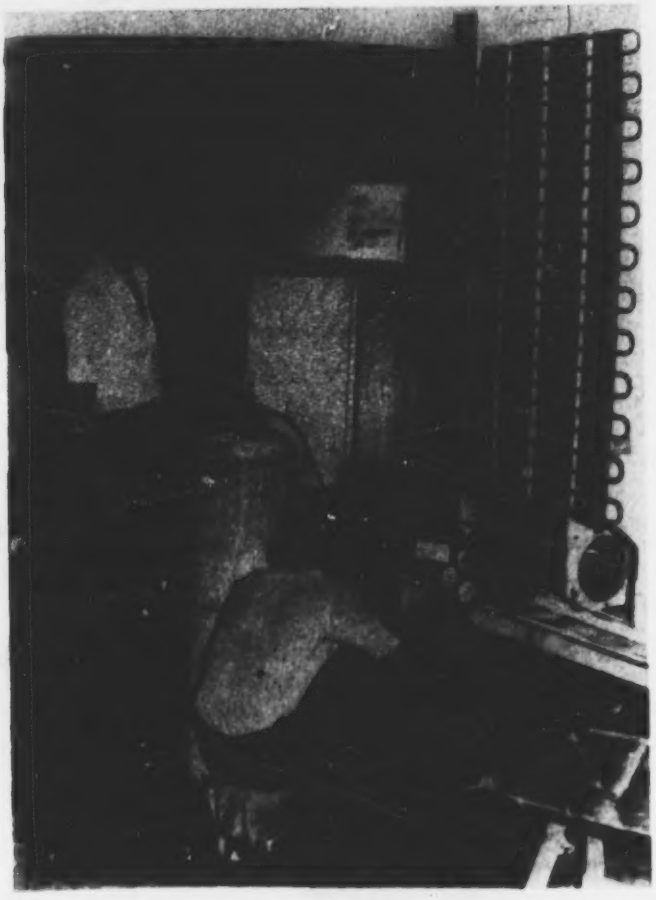
7.0 NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Provision of Non-formal education is part of accepted government policy. In pursuance of this policy, a number of programmes have been designed and implemented to benefit a number of client groups which include school leavers and those who never entered the school system. The responsibility for the design and implementation of non-formal programmes lies with the Non-formal Education Branch of the Ministry of Education.

Presently there are four programmes which are conducted to benefit children, youths and adults. The four programmes are:

(a) Skills Development Programmes for School Leavers.
(b) Literacy Programme for Non-School goers and Primary School Drop-outs.
(c) Adult Education/Community Education Programme.
(d) English Classes for Adults.

The Skills Development Programme is the most extensive involving 600 Centres. Classes are held in schools after school hours using available facilities. The training period varies from 06 to 10 months depending on the courses. The courses cover 40 different areas. Instructors are recruited locally and the necessary equipment is provided by the Ministry.



Training in Refrigeration at a Technical/Vocational Centre (Skills Development Programme for School Leavers) 23

The Literacy Programme is geared to cater for premature school leavers and those who do not attend school. The concentration of children and others in the above categories is high in low income urban areas and in very remote areas.

Literacy classes are conducted in the afternoon for such non-school going children in school buildings, village temples or community centres on three days of the week. Primary school teachers teach in these classes. A special allowance is paid to them for this work. The number of literacy classes is 85 and the majority of them are located in the City of Colombo and its suburbs. All attempts are made to direct these children from these classes to the formal school after a period of time, thereby providing for re-entry into the formal system.

A Literacy Class in Progress.

Community Education Programme is organized on the basis of electorates. The Adult Education Officer in an Electorate is responsible for the organization of the programme. This programme is designed and implemented in close co-operation with other government agencies and voluntary organizations operating in the area. The services of local resource people and local leaders are also obtained for the purpose.

English classes for adults are conducted during week-ends in schools. There is a demand on the part of many adults for facilities to acquire competency in English and this programme attempts to meet this demand specially in rural areas. Experienced English teachers are employed to conduct these classes.

8.0 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

There is a Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) under the Ministry of Education for the design and revision of curricula for the different levels of the general education system. Government policy, current trends in different subjects, teaching methodology, and the use of low-cost materials are among the factors which form the framework for curricular design and revision. A major segment of curriculum development effort is focussed on design and preparation of curricular material, course guides, resource and evaluation materials for the use of teachers, identification of problem areas in curriculum implementation and design of suitable material for research and follow–up action.

Integrated science is one of the subjects of the common curriculum of the Junior Secondary Cycle. As 'practical inquiry approach' is emphasized in teaching science at this level, the provision of needed equipment is of particular significance. The Education Ministry has launched a project for designing and producing low-cost science kits.

8.1 Teaching of English

English is the most important foreign language taught in schools. It is a compulsory subject of the Junior Secondary curriculum while it is optionally taught in grades 3–5 of the primary school. In recent years, several measures have been taken to improve the standard of English. A project to improve the quality of teaching English was launched in 1983. This project, which covers nearly 1000 schools, is directed towards the production and use of teaching materials which emphasize activity-based skills.

8.2 Education Television Service

An Education Television Service was inaugurated in 1983. At the initial stage the T.V. programmes are produced to cater to the needs of science pupils in the senior secondary cycle. Lessons are transmitted, during school hours in Sinhala and Tamil in each of the following subjects, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology. Preparation of scripts, training of personnel in script writing, preparation and distribution of teacher guides and evaluation of the programmes are undertaken by the Curriculum Development Centre while the Rupavahini (T.V.) Corporation of Sri Lanka produces and transmits the programme. Television recievers and video cassette recorders are supplied by the Ministry of Education.

8.3 Population Education

Population education which is integrated with instruction in such disciplines as Science, Social Studies and Mathematics, seeks to make the pupils aware of demographic problems and consequences arising from a rapid population expansion. The methods and material used are directed towards the development of an appreciation of the necessity of rational decision making in matters relating to population at the individual and national levels. In addition to integration of population education with other subjects of the Junior Secondary curriculum, Supplementary Readers on topics related to population situations are produced and made available to teachers and pupils

9.0 TEACHER EDUCATION

In Sri Lanka, teachers recruited to the teaching service are untrained at the time of recruitment. They are subsequently trained while in service. The teacher education programme is of three years' duration. The first two years of this programme take the form of institutionalized training which is offered at 25 Teachers' Colleges. The third year is devoted to on-the-job training in selected schools. During this year the trainees are assisted and evaluated by experienced teachers serving in the schools to which the trainees are attached. The professional component of the curriculum of the teacher education programme is common to all the trainees but the academic component is designed to cater for 19 categories of trainees.

9.1 Pre-Service Teacher Training

The present practice of recruiting untrained teachers to the service will be replaced progressively by a scheme under which only trained teachers will be absorbed into the service. In order to implement this scheme, a programme of pre-service teacher training will be introduced in the last quarter of this year. For this purpose, eight of the existing 25 teachers' Colleges will be developed to conduct fully residential pre-service teacher education courses from October 1984. Each of these Colleges will have residential facilities for 500 students and will offer a two year institutionalized course in the following areas:

(a) Teaching of Humanities.
(b) Teaching of Science and Mathematics
(c) Teaching of English as an International Language.
(d) Teaching of Life Skills and Technical Subjects.

Institutionalized training will be followed by one-year's internship at selected schools. On satisfactory completion of the internship the trainees will be awarded a certificate which will be a pre-requisite in future to join the teaching profession as a non-graduate teacher.

Seventeen of the 25 Teacher Colleges will continue to conduct the 3-year teacher education course to clear the present backlog of untrained non-graduate teachers in service. The distance teacher education programme which is described elsewhere will also assist in clearing the backlog.

9.2 Professional Training for Graduate Teachers

Graduate teachers in service are recognized as professionally competent teachers only after they have obtained a post-graduate diploma (or an equivalent or higher qualification) in education. Post-graduate courses in education are provided at three of the existing eight Universities. Teachers are selected for admission to the post-graduate diploma course on the basis of a competitive examination.

9.3 Distance Teacher Education

The annual intake to the teaching service has tended to exceed the annual intake to the Teachers' Colleges. This is the major reason for the present backlog of untrained teachers in service which cannot be cleared by institutionalized teacher education programmes alone. Therefore, the Education Ministry is conducting a Distance Education Programme to accelerate the process of training the untrained teachers. A Central Unit under the Ministry is responsible for such functions as design and preparation of training/learning materials, setting and evaluating assignments, and conducting contact sessions to provide for direct interaction among trainees and trainers. Contact sessions are held at Area Centres in the different Districts/Regions of the country. The contact sessions are generally held during week-ends and school vacations using the available facilities of schools and Teachers' Colleges. The tutorial staff of an Area-Centre is drawn mainly from among lecturers of Teachers' Colleges. At the end of the course, all trainees sit an examination leading to the Trained Teachers' Certificate which is the same as that awarded to those who successfully complete institutionalized courses at the Teachers' Colleges.

9.4 In Service Education

Implementation of Curricula which are subject to ,periodic revision requires a mechanism for the continual updating of the knowledge base of teachers. The in-service training programme of the Ministry has, thus acquired the characteristic of a continuing process while training provided at the teachers' colleges has a pre-service orientation. An innovation developed by the Curriculum Development Centre for the in-service training of teachers is the scheme of in-service advisors or master teachers. Master teachers are specially selected and trained for guiding and assisting the large body of classroom teachers. The master teacher scheme has been in operation for several years and its positive impact on class-room instruction demonstrates the soundness of the scheme.

The responsibility for in-service training of teachers is shared between the CDC and the Regional Departments of Education. In-service programme for senior secondary teachers are designed and implemented by the CDC in co-operation with Regional Staff, while the main responsibility for the conduct of in-service sessions for the primary and junior secondary teachers lies with the Regional Departments. The master teachers who are ifivolved in the design and implementation of in-service programmes at Regional Levels are periodically briefed at the C.D.C.

Teachers at an In-Service Training Session. 27

10.0 SPORTS AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Sports and Co-curricular activities form a very important part of the educational programme. The present emphasis in co-curricular activities is on participation, improvement of standards and specialized training of the talented to reach International Standards.

Participation in physical Fitness Exercises is compulsory for all pupils in post-primary grades. Further, in all Senior Secondary Schools pupils must take part, at least, in one of the following activities:

Atheletics
Volley ball for boys
Net ball for girls.

District coaches are appointed for each of the above sports. All other games are optional and each school is expected to provide for at least four such games. Sports competitions are organised at different levels (school, sub-district, district and national levels).

The Accident Insurance Scheme which was introduced sometime ago will be expanded to cover all injuries and accidents, which may occur during participation in sports.

Teachers are trained not only to be coaches, but also to develop their own talents. Towards this end, sports competions are organized for teachers at different levels, culminating in Teachers' Competitions at national level.

28 *Participation in Physical Fitness Exercises which are compulsory for All Post-Primary Pupils.*

Other co-curricular activities can broadly be divided into three categories:

(a) Activities such as Cadeting, Scouting and Guiding which have advisory or parent bodies outside the school.

(b) Activities carried out by school-based clubs and societies which have no connection with any outside organization.

(c) Other miscellaneous activities, exhibitions, excursions, competitions, variety entertainments, school bands etc.

'Hawisi' Band – A school band using traditional instruments.

11.0 SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education is concerned with the adoption of special methods to meet the special needs of children whose physical, intellectual and emotional development cannot be promoted by normal techniques of education.

Special Education is provided through two types of programmes.

(a) The integrated Special Education Programme under which handicapped children attend regular schools and learn with normal children.

(b) The non-Integrated special schools programme under which handicapped children learn in Special Schools, which are residential for the most part.

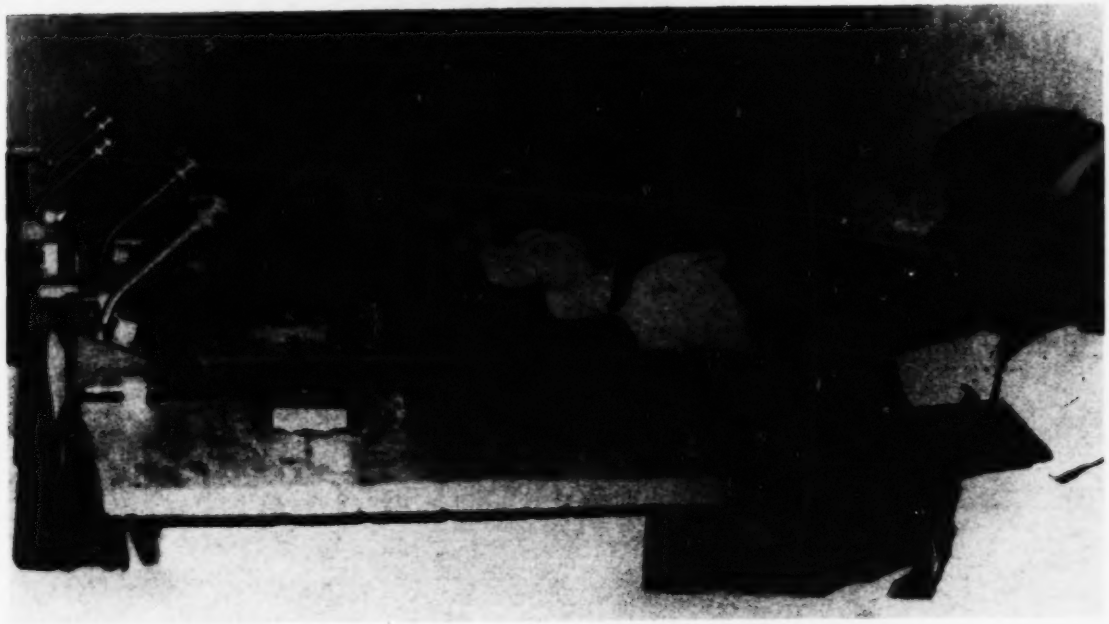
As a matter of policy, the ministry has decided to send handicapped children wherever possible to regular schools under the integrated system.

At present Special Education Programmes are available for the following categories of handicapped children:

(a) Visually handicapped children
(b) Hearing Handicapped children
(c) Mentally handicapped children
(d) The crippled children
(e) The slow learners.

The above programmes are now being monitored by special education officers who are generally responsible for the screening of children, their placement in schools, supervision of special education teachers and special education units in the different parts of the country.

Many disabled children have successfully completed their secondary education in government schools and some of them have proceeded to University.



30 *A Special Education Class for the Hearing – Handicapped.*

12.0 PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

The entire system of Public Examinations is centrally controlled by the Department of Examinations. The total programme of the department covers over 120 examinations a year. The examinations handled can broadly be classified as:–

I. School Examinations,
II. Technical Colleges, Training Colleges and other Certificate Examinations,
III. Recruitment Examinations,
IV. Professional Examinations, and
V. Foreign Examinations.

The Department's heaviest commitment, however, is in the area of the following examinations pertaining to general education in Sri Lanka:

I. Grade V Examination for the award of scholarships and the selection of students for placement in schools preferred by their parents,
II. G.C.E. (O/L) (General Certificate of Education, Ordinary Level)Examination
III. G.C.E. (A/L) (General Certificate of Education, Advanced Level)Examination

The Grade V Examination is held for pupils completing the primary cycle. The main purpose of this examination is the selection of deserving students for the award of scholarships. The G.C.E. (O/L) Examination is held at the end of Grade 10 (end of the Junior Secondary cycle) and G.C.E. (A/L) Examination at the end fo Grade 12 (end of the Senior Secondary Cycle).

As large numbers of candidates sit the three examinations refered to, a novel method of marking answer scripts known as "conference marking" is adopted. Under this system, marking examiners come to a few centres where answer scripts are marked under the supervision of Chief Examiners. (Under the earlier system, the scripts were marked by the examiners in their homes and the marked scripts were dispatched to the Department of Examinations). Conference marking has considerably reduced the time span involved in the release of results.

13.0 PROVISION OF INCENTIVES

Participation in education is determined not only by the educational opportunities that are provided but also by the degree of usage of such opportunities. Provision of a wide network of schools alone is no guarantee that educational opportunities are within the reach of the intended target group. It has been observed that socio-economic reasons keep a certain proportion of children of school-going age away from school. Several measures have been adopted by the state to reduce the cost of education to parents and to induce them to send their children to school.

A scheme is now in operation for the provision of free text-books to all pupils who are in primary and junior secondary grades, in Government and private schools. Text-books provided for the different Grades are as follows:

Kg. – Grade II	–	Religion, Mother Tongue (Sinhala/Tamil)
Grades III – V	–	Religion, Mother Tongue (Sinhala/Tamil), Mathematics, English.
Grades VI – VII	–	Religion, Mother Tongue (Sinhala/Tamil), English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.
Grades IX – X	–	Religion, Mother Tongue (Sinhala/Tamil), Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Commerce and Literature.

It is observed that the supply of free text-books has contributed to increased retention of pupils within the system. The fact that the books are supplied to all pupils without considering the financial capacity of parents has prevented a social stratification of pupils within the school.

Provision of free 'snacks' to all children in the lower Grades of the primary cycle of selected schools is yet another positive measure taken to provide some degree of relief as well as to spread educational opportunities to the more economically depressed. The free mid-day meal programme is implemented in collaboration with the C.A.R.E. Organization.

To enable talented pupils from poorer homes to continue education in better equipped secondary schools a scheme of scholarships is in operation. Children in the terminal Grade of the primary cycle who perform well at the Scholarship Examination are entitled to financial assistance from the state if the income levels of their parents are low. The possibility of winning a scholarship for the continuation of education at the secondary level encourages primary pupils to stay on at school to sit the Grade V Scholarship Examination.

14.0 INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

14.1 School Clusters

"Education Proposals for Reform 1981" introduced the concept of School Clusters as a measure to overcome shortcomings in the school system, specially to:

(a) reduce the existing inequities in the provision of educational facilities
(b) enable schools to be managed by more competent personnel, recognizing the key role of the Head of the school, and
(c) facilitate even the smallest schools to belong to a group whose collective resources would permit the provision of the expensive facilities and services to all schools within the group and thereby induce all parents both rich and poor to look to the schools in their neighbourhood for the education of their children.

A scheme prepared by the Ministry envisages the grouping of schools in a defined geographical area to form a 'cluster' for the purpose of better organization and management leading to more efficient utilization of resources both of the state and the community. The cluster of schools will function as an administrative entity to meet the total educational needs of the entire area it serves. Pupil admissions, requisition of supplies, capital expenditure and deployment of teachers will be on the basis that each cluster is one organizational unit.

A Cluster Board consisting of the heads of the member schools will be responsible for the formulation and implementation of proposals for meeting the educational needs of the catchment area of the cluster including (a) the determination of priorities, (b) allocation of resources to the member schools, (c) enlisting community support to cluster programmes and (d) implementation of non-formal programmes to benefit school leavers and adult members of the community. The Ministry has up to now established 21 pilot school clusters in the country.

14.2 School Zones

Up to now the smallest unit of educational supervision in the districts has been the Circuit consisting of 30–40 schools. A Circuit Education Officer exercises routine supervision over the schools in his Circuits.

In order to provide a more rational basis for the allocation of resources required for the development of the school system at district and sub-district levels, a pilot programme is now being implemented in four districts to replace circuits with school zones. A school zone consists of two or more Grama Sevaka Divisions. (A Grama Sevaka Division is the smallest governmental administrative unit. It is also a unit used for the Population Census). As accurate population data in respect of a zone are available, it is possible to assess the present and future demand for primary as well as secondary education and to rationalize the school network in each zone to meet the present and emerging needs. This scheme will be progressively extended to all the other districts.

Each School Zone, which consists of 10–15 schools will have a three-year rolling zonal plan for the educational development of the zone. In this plan, the focus will be on the integrated development of a school network to meet the needs of the zone. The scale of provision of facilities to a school will be determined by the contribution it can make to the development of the school network of which it is a part. The avaiable resources will be channelled to the development of the zonal school network as a whole to meet the educational needs of the zone.

A decision to develop school zones into school clusters on an island-wide scale will be taken after an evaluation of the pilot school cluster programme.

15.0 EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Provision of free education has imposed a growing financial burden on the State. Contributions made by community members and other voluntary organizations add up to less than 5% of the educational budget. Pupils voluntarily pay facilities fees which vary from Rs. 5/- to Rs. 20/- per pupil per term. Facilities fees are used by school heads for improving library and sports facilities and for meeting other approved items of expenditure.

Educational expenditure amounts to nearly 3.0% of the Gross National Product. Government's financial commitment to general education amounts to nearly 6% of the total budget. Recurrent expenditure on general education stands at 93.4% of the total allocations provided for this segment of education. Salary payments to employees constitute nearly 98% of the recurrent expenditure and teacher salaries account for 96.5% of all salary payments.

The Universities and the Technical Institutes under the Ministry of Higher Education have to depend almost entirely on Government funds for maintenance and expansion. In recent years expenditure on higher education has shown an upward trend. Today financial allocations for the Ministry of Higher Education account for nearly 1.5% of the Government budget.